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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001788

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: NEW HEAD OF INDONESIAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE
DEALING WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REF: JAKARTA 1677 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Kemal Stamboel is the new chair of Indonesia's parliamentary commission dealing with foreign policy and defense. He should prove to be a productive interlocutor for the U.S. on critical policy issues. An experienced businessman with a U.S. education and a solid knowledge of international affairs, Kemal belies the conservative image of his Islamic-oriented party. Although Stamboel is a new member of Parliament, he is well-connected in a wide variety of arenas, from political to Muslim circles to the NGO community. Moreover, he is active on environmental issues, and is a strong advocate for transparency, good governance, and sound economic practices. Bio-data is contained in para 8. END SUMMARY.

INDONESIA'S "JOHN KERRY"

¶2. (C) The largest Indonesian Islamic-oriented political party, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), has appointed first-time parliamentarian and experienced businessman Kemal Stamboel as the chair of Parliament's (DPR) Commission One. This move came after the original pick, PKS President Tifatul Sembiring, became Minister of Communication and Information. Commission One deals with foreign policy, defense, intelligence and information issues. PKS was entitled to make the choice for this key committee due its coalition discussions with President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat, which holds a plurality of support in Parliament. As Indonesia's new "John Kerry," Stamboel, 60, replaces Theo Sambuaga of the Golkar Party (Sambuaga decided not to run again).

THE NEW MODERATE FACE OF PKS

¶3. (C) Although at first glance the appointment may give pause to those convinced that PKS has an Islamist agenda aimed at pushing sharia law, Kemal contradicts this both in actions and words. Kemal represents a moderate, business-friendly face of PKS -- an experienced businessman with his own blog, he got his master's in Business Management from the Arthur D. Little School of Management in Massachusetts and served with Pricewaterhouse Coopers Consulting Indonesia for many years.

¶4. (C) Kemal, a PKS member since 2003, told poloff that PKS was often misquoted, with some conservative legislation attributed wrongly to the party. PKS, he maintained, is "not trying to convert people" or dominate others -- "we believe other good people have different beliefs, and we should be able to work together to fight corruption and build islands of integrity." His goal on Commission One, he said, was to "introduce PKS to the international community" and improve

its image.

WELL-CONNECTED AND ENGAGED ON U.S. POLICY ISSUES

15. (C) Kemal, the son of a soldier-turned-diplomat, has connections from the Presidential Palace to business, religious and NGO circles, and interests ranging from climate change to telecommunications. He worked with the recently named head of the Presidential Reform Unit, Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, as a member of the post-tsunami Supervisory Board of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias. He was President and Director of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Consulting Indonesia for 25 years and Country leader of IBM Business Consulting Indonesia. He served at the President's pleasure as the only non-ministerial member of the National Information, Communications and Technology Board.

16. (C) Kemal has a strong track record on policy issues which coincide with U.S. interests and the goals of our Comprehensive Partnership with Indonesia. Previously the chair of the World Wildlife Federation Indonesia, he is committed to combating climate change. He is a strong advocate for transparency and good governance, and is a founding member of the Indonesian Society for Transparency.

17. (C) He has also spoken openly in support of the Corruption Eradication Commission, whose mandate was recently threatened by a court case (see reftel). His legislative goals, he told poloff, include a more balanced State Secrecy law and converging various pieces of telecommunication legislation to improve services and infrastructure. Kemal

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has already indicated his willingness to engage with the U.S. by attending Mission events and meetings, and should prove a productive interlocutor for engagement with the Parliament on U.S. policy goals.

BIO-DATA

18. (U) Kemal Stamboel was born in Malang, East Java, on August 17, 1949. He graduated from the School of Psychology of the University of Padjadjaran, Bandung, and holds a Masters of Science in Business Management from the Arthur D. Little School of Management in Massachusetts. He spent most of his career in the business world as director for twenty-five years of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Consulting Indonesia and did a stint as Country Leader at IBM Business Consulting. He began working directly with the national government in his capacities as member of the Supervisory Board for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias in 2004 and as board member of the National Information Communications and Technology Board from 2006 to 2008. He has also been active in foundations, including: Chair of the World Wildlife Foundation Indonesia; President of the Indonesia Financial Association; founder of the Indonesian-German Circle and the Institute for Good Governance; Advisory Board Chair of the Teachers Foundation; and a member of the Sampoerna Foundation and Islamic Charity Foundation Nurul Fikri. He is a Muslim.

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